

Distribution Network, a supply route to Afghanistan by making available its ground and Caspian naval transportation facilities.

Additionally, Azerbaijan provides specialized training for Afghan police, border guard officers and de-miners, education and training of Afghan civilian and military medical doctors, and medical treatment of Afghan citizens at Azeri hospitals. Azerbaijan has provided medical equipment and supplies to Afghanistan as well as assisting in the construction of schools and hospitals there.

Azerbaijan remains a reliable partner of NATO and the EU in the South Caucasus through its consistent and effective contribution to common goals and objectives. Azerbaijan is also an active partner of the United States in efforts regarding the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction through its participation in programs such as Caspian Guard and Cooperative Threat Reduction.

On July 5, 2011, an Azerbaijani aircraft flying a support mission for NATO troops crashed as it descended into Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan. While it is my understanding that investigations are ongoing, it has come to my attention that one leading theory is that Taliban fighters may have shot down the aircraft as it made its final approach. While we await further information on exactly what happened that night in Afghanistan, it is important that we recognize the loss of life of the nine crew members on board that flight who made the ultimate sacrifice.

While we can take comfort knowing that we are not alone in this fight, we must also make sure we comfort those who make sacrifices alongside us. It is with a heavy heart that I offer my thanks and appreciation to the family, friends, and countrymen to those crew members of Silk Way Airlines IL-76. The world is a safer place due to their commitment to support and supply our troops and allies in their hunt for those seeking to harm peace-loving people around the world.

#### ENDING CONGRESSIONAL PENSIONS

### HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 14, 2011*

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to put an end to the defined-benefit retirement plan currently available to Members of Congress.

These are extremely difficult economic times. We are in a debt crisis that will require sacrifices on the part of all Americans. I served in both the U.S. Army and the Marine Corps, and I was taught that leaders should never ask others to do anything that they themselves would be unwilling to do. Congress needs to set an example and lead the way for the country. I think this is a good start.

The defined benefit retirement plan gives Members of Congress an averaged percentage of their annual salary (currently \$174,000) for every year they serve in Congress. To be eligible for the retirement plan they must first serve at least five years. They will then receive 1.7% for every year up to 20 that they serve in Congress, and 1% for every year after 20. For example, if a Member of Congress served for 20 years, and they were at

least 62, he or she would receive 34% of their salary, or \$59,160 per year, based on the current salary. Members of Congress pay 1.3% of their salary into the pension plan and are required to pay into Social Security at the same rate as everyone else. They may contribute to a Thrift Savings Plan that has a match similar to many private sector 401(k) plans.

My legislation will honor any retirement benefits accrued prior to the passage of this bill, and will keep the Social Security and Thrift Savings Plan in place.

I believe that Members of Congress should feel the same economic pressures the rest of society does, and I firmly believe that the current effort to reduce spending and constrain the size and scope of government requires that all possible solutions be taken, including cuts to the Congressional budget. I urge the passage of this bill.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF THE BUILDING OWNERS AND MANAGERS ASSOCIATION OF SAN FRANCISCO

### HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 14, 2011*

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the Building Owners and Managers Association of San Francisco on the historic occasion of its 100th anniversary.

BOMA San Francisco has been advocating for commercial real estate interests, training future leaders and promoting sustainable practices. I have partnered with BOMA since my days on the San Mateo Board of Supervisors and in the California Legislature and have witnessed its effective work that supports business growth which in turn creates tax dollars for important public services.

Healthy commercial real estate provides homes for countless businesses that employ our workforce. BOMA always strives to create better work environments for our future generations. It has been honored for its progressive environmental policies to help promote energy conservation and sustainable practices in office buildings. BOMA is also a tireless advocate of emergency preparedness.

For 20 years BOMA has partnered with the San Francisco Fire Department and put big smiles on children's faces. The San Francisco Firefighter Toy Program is the oldest program of its kind in the country and has donated over a million toys to disadvantaged children.

Mr. Speaker, the Building Owners and Managers Association of San Francisco has left its mark on San Francisco and made it a more beautiful, healthy and happier city for a century. I ask this body to honor BOMA on May 19, its 100th anniversary.

#### MASS GRAVES HOLD THOUSANDS, KASHMIR INQUIRY FINDS

### HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 14, 2011*

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, tonight I wish to call the attention of my col-

leagues to the most recent developments in India-controlled Kashmir. In late August, the Jammu and Kashmir State Human Rights Commission stated that it had found evidence of 2,156 unidentified bodies buried in approximately 40 mass graves, officially recognized for the first time, that pock mark the landscape of this long troubled region. This disturbing revelation, while horrific in scale and heart-breaking in scope, has the potential to serve as a catalyst to propel Kashmir forward, away from its violent past. For the first time, everyone in Kashmir, as well as the rest of the world, will be forced to acknowledge the wanton violence and unrest that have torn their communities apart.

History has taught us that in conflicts like the one propagated on Kashmir and its people, the first casualty is always the truth. The findings in this inquiry have now irrefutably confirmed the very worst fears people like myself who have been concerned about this issue since 1989. It is my sincerest hope that when finally faced with the sum of their actions to this point, those responsible for these crimes will see the error of their ways and summarily be brought to justice; I also hope that all of the well intentioned people of the region, whether they are Kashmiri, Pakistani, or Indian, can use this tragic circumstance to begin to work towards reconciliation, and finally move towards a peaceful resolution for everyone living in Kashmir. I am submitting an article from the August 23, 2011 edition of the New York Times and strongly urge my colleagues to read it.

#### MASS GRAVES HOLD THOUSANDS, KASHMIR INQUIRY FINDS

(By Lydia Polgreen)

NEW DELHI.—Thousands of bullet-riddled bodies are buried in dozens of unmarked graves across Kashmir, a state human rights commission inquiry has concluded, many of them likely to be those of civilians who disappeared more than a decade ago in a brutal insurgency.

The inquiry, the result of three years of investigative work by senior police officers working for the Jammu and Kashmir State Human Rights Commission, brings the first official acknowledgment that civilians might have been buried in mass graves in Kashmir, a region claimed by both India and Pakistan where insurgents waged a bloody battle for independence in the early 1990s. The report sheds new light on a grim chapter in the history of the troubled region and confirms a 2008 report by a Kashmiri human rights organization that found hundreds of bodies buried in the Kashmir Valley.

Tens of thousands of people died in the insurgency, which began in 1989 and was partly fueled by weapons, cash and training from Pakistan.

According to the report, the bodies of hundreds of men described as unidentified militants were buried in unmarked graves. But of the more than 2,000 bodies, 574 were identified as local residents.

"There is every probability that these unidentified dead bodies buried in various unmarked graves at 38 places of North Kashmir may contain the dead bodies of enforced disappearances," the report said.

The report catalogs 2,156 bodies found in graves in four districts of Kashmir that had been at the heart of the insurgency. It called for a thorough inquiry and a collection of DNA evidence to identify the dead, and, for the future, proper identification of anyone killed by security forces in Kashmir to avoid abuse of special laws shielding the military